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# SPORTS

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## & FITNESS ISSUE

**546**

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# CONTENTS

**LAVENDER**

## FEATURE: SPORTS & FITNESS

- 24** Rugby's Bingham Cup
- 28** Walking with the Prime Timers
- 30** North Star Classic
- 32** Community Sports Directory
- 34** Playing for the Other Team: Dear Abby
- 50** At-Large: Motivation & the Gym

## OUR LAVENDER

- 8** From the Editor
- 12** Lavender Lens
- 13** A Word in Edgewise

## OUR SCENE

- 16** Arts: Spotlight
- 20** Food & Dining: Harbor View Cafe

## OUR LIVES

- 36** Quatrefoil Library's 30th Anniversary

## OUR HOMES

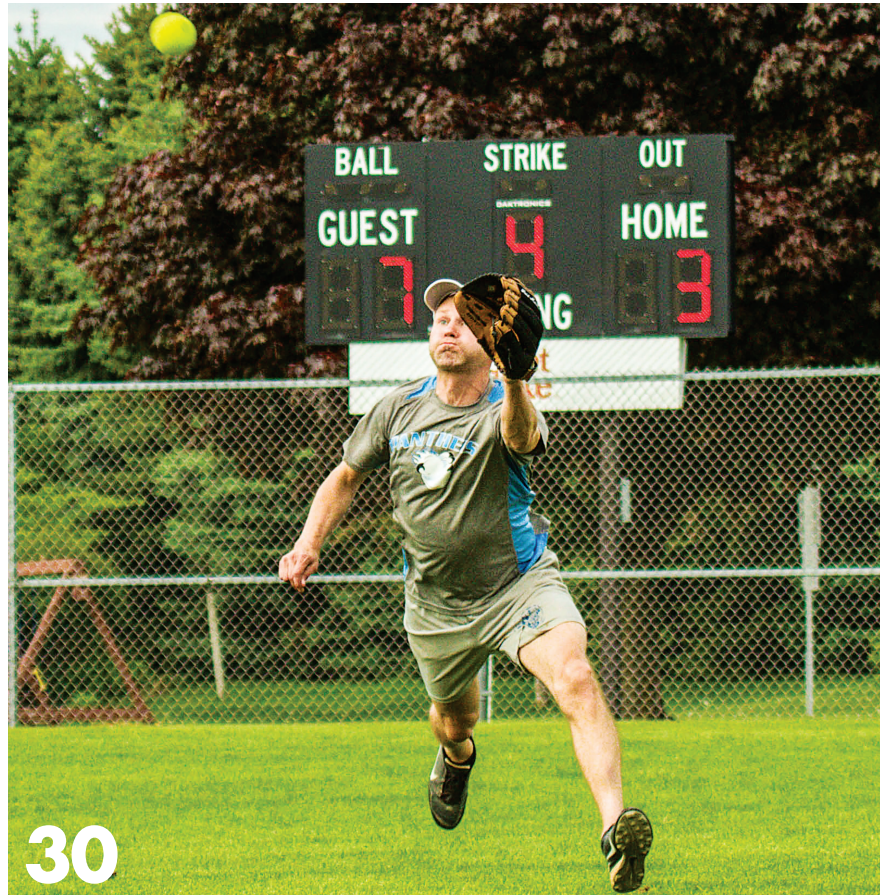
- 40** Ride Review

## OUR RESOURCES

- 45** Classifieds
- 46** The Network
- 48** Community Connection

## OUR VOICES

- 44** Trolin



Page 30: Photo by Larry Barthel/Triquetra Productions. Page 16: Image by Dani Werner. Page 20: Photo by Andy Lien. Page 40: Photo by Randy Stern.

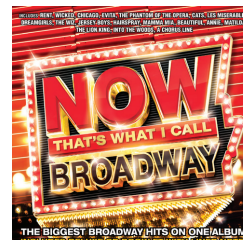
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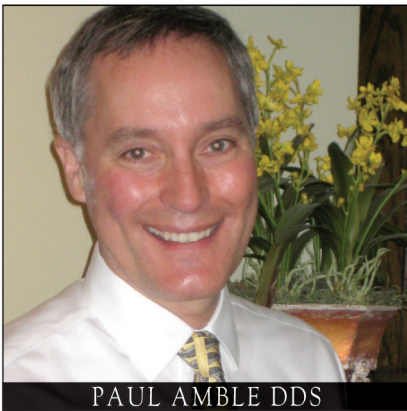
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# The Fallacy of Privacy and the Securing of Safety

In a magazine dedicated to talking about Sports & Fitness, I find myself at a loss to not recoil at the thought of participating in an organized sport or working out at a gym. Athletics and exercise are daunting for those of us who haven't yet found physical fitness and sports to be welcoming as a concept or a practice. But, worse, the barriers to accessing these spaces and activities are too great. The stigmas I have to jump over as hurdles are too high. The clubs and locker rooms are mine fields. The private is public and I choose not to accept those conditions.

I'm overweight. It's a body type that has always existed but has been vilified and othered only in modern times, as the number of overweight people has risen while the cultural acceptance of overweight people has seen a steady declension. While I understand that there is great resistance to drawing comparisons between the struggles of people in different groups, being overweight has given me insight into the challenges faced by people who are transgender and gender non-conforming, as well as great empathy. There are a number of comparisons between being overweight and being a person who is transitioning into a gender that matches their identity: our bodies are different from the norm, we are hoping to "pass" and be seen as just one of the crowd of our peers, and our mere existence threatens the rules and codification of the gendered binary that seems to hold our heteronormative world together. We don't fit the strict definitions of what our culture wants to be dominant, based on what we see presented in the media, which constitutes only about five percent of the world's body types: lean, white, and fit. Not too much body hair, not too big or small of breasts, not too small of penis, not too short of neck, no rolls, no redheads, no cellulite, or flabby arms.

No five o'clock shadow on the face or five-month shadow in the armpits. For women. And men who've transitioned to be women. And queer people who are forced into picking a gender based on which door they walk through. And maybe the men should trim up to a certain point, too, while we're at it. We are policing our bodies and each other's bodies and we are suffering for it.

This idea of "passing" is something that a great number of people who fit the gender binary (women being feminine, men being masculine) adhere to and strive to stay within, something that doesn't help those of us who are on the fringes. It's a club whose members might both effortlessly fit into by virtue of being born with genes that fit the dominant culture, as well as those who torture themselves in order to maintain the guidelines that they see are constricting and choking, but lend order to their world and how they see it. People who are considered to be "passing" might do so at great risk to themselves and their health.

It's a bunch of bullshit.

How is this bullshit most grossly enforced? By making people bare themselves in restrooms and locker rooms.

Take my example of being outside the norm by being overweight and

expand the experience to include people who are transitioning, or have transitioned, to their authentic gender. Consider people who identify as queer and eschew gender definitions and limitations. Think about those of us who don't want to fit into what a "woman" or a "man" are supposed to look like (and, depending on who you ask, plenty of recent versions of what "woman" represents would mean that we shouldn't even be working out or playing sports, so kiss that Title IX goodbye). People are putting themselves at risk when they enter into such spaces where vulnerability has higher positioning than empowerment, no matter who we are or what we look like. The problem isn't who's going into the spaces. The problems are, simply, the spaces, first, and the expectations within them, second. This applies to both locker rooms and restrooms with both spaces having their own unique conditions and challenges to do such basic things: bodily functions and preparations.

Being a women's, gender, and sexuality studies major, people often ask me what "gender studies" is, with good reason. Here's a great example. If you compare the conditions of restrooms for men and women, there is a stark double-standard against men that our society has internalized and codified as acceptable. Women, apparently having more of a need and requirement for privacy (or safety if we're talking about women naturally being the prey of men who are predators, another horrific standard that some people have internalized), have private stalls in which to use the same toilet they would at home, under the same circumstances that they would use it in the safety and privacy of where they live.

Men, on the other hand, are required and expected to use the restroom without private spaces, getting a trough or a urinal — two fixtures that had to be invented and manufactured by the plumbing industry for this purpose — and have to actually disrobe and bare the parts of themselves that we have deemed to be private in our culture. This double-standard is an incredible disconnect. We tell children that they have private parts that only they have control over; that nobody should ask to see or touch what has been deemed private. We tell them that, as they grow up, they can determine who has access to their private parts in terms of intimacy and sexuality. But then we tell boys that they don't get to have that privacy in restrooms. That we've designed spaces and actually invented items to be manufactured that create restrooms in which men are required to dehumanize themselves as they publicly perform their basic, private functions multiple times a day. That, my friends, is why "gender studies" exists: to identify and call out discrimination based on gender.

As I've been asking the question of why haven't we talked about the actual problems in the state of public restrooms, the fact that we require men to be treated so differently than women, plenty of men have expressed that they are not supportive of this double-standard. We should address this problem as one that is actual, rather than one that has been invented for an election year.



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Really, consider recent history of what's happened when legislators have tried to curtail the rights of members of this community in terms of marriage legislation. The community rejected that proposed discriminatory legislation and went so far as to push and secure those rights as law. In the case of transgender rights and who's allowed in which private spaces, what are the possible outcomes here? First of all, people are definitely waking up to the fact that such proposed legislation scares a large number of people who will now be propelled to the ballot boxes on Election Day; a ruse that needs to be called out as often as possible. By making transgender people into something they're not, whether they be framed as predators or oddities or new-fangled fads, they have been turned into a political strategy; invented as a new monster in this current wave of propaganda.

This concocted threat of transgender people requiring legislation to keep them out of restrooms and locker rooms of their chosen gender needs to be shot down as a non-issue. In reality, we need to protect our transgender friends, family members, and people we've never even met from the people who want to restrict their rights and actually make them less safe, less human. Second, an outcome could actually be a push for restroom and locker room reform. You want safe and secure private spaces in restrooms? We need to expand that to include everyone, which means that this culture needs to stop discriminating against men. How realistic is it to say that a next step could be the redesign and reconstruction of all restrooms to have private spaces for toilets, removing the exposed urinals and troughs? Well, it'd be a great expense, but it wouldn't be actually inventing devices for a problem that didn't exist, like was done with

urinals and troughs. And, in a crass way, it'd create jobs for such reform. Do I think it's a realistic outcome? I don't know. But my gender studies heart says it'd be a correct and just outcome.

No matter what the outcomes may possibly be, as with the fight for marriage equality, this is where we need to find empathy. I don't offer up my stories of woe about being overweight in a locker room in order to compare and determine who's suffered more, I offer them as a means of indicating that I can empathize with being an outsider. And I can empathize with having to do certain things to try to conform to at least some of the standards of "femininity" that people who are transitioning to being female have to now consider, thanks to the gender binary. And I can empathize with men who are being forced to do something private in a dehumanizing and public way, because I see it now and have named it. And I am sorry that these are our conditions.

We do not have to accept them. But, before we revolutionize the restrooms and locker rooms of the world, we should first band together to fight the people who want to make the conditions in such places even worse, even tighter, even more restricted and dehumanizing. Please find how you can also empathize with the people who actually are at risk: those who are forced or expected to conform to conditions that they don't find acceptable, whether they be men using restrooms without privacy, people who don't look like they "belong" in a locker room, and people who don't conform to their original gender at birth.

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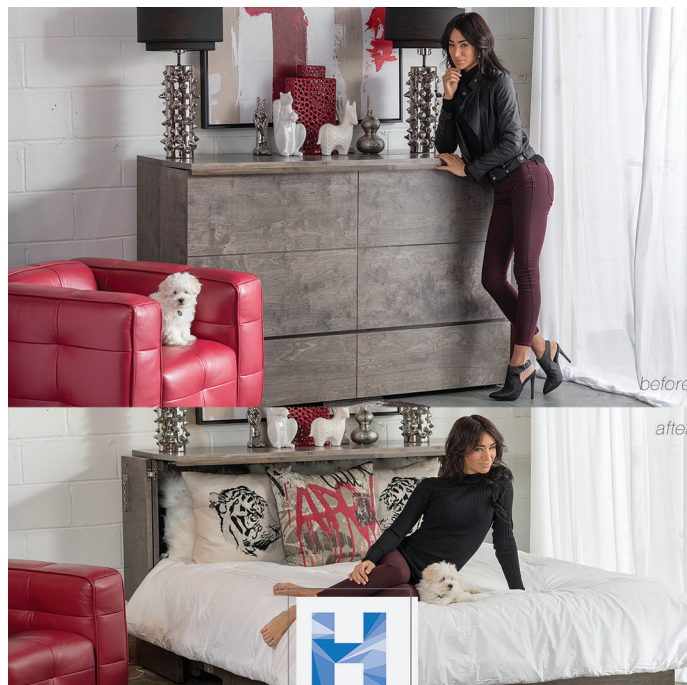


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## OUR LAVENDER

A WORD IN EDGEWISE | BY E.B. BOATNER

# Merely A Matter of Degree?

I chat weekly with an old grade-school, high-school, *life* friend out on the west coast. Over the years we've solved many of the world's problems in our conversations. Recently, out of the blue, she announced: "The two most controlling sentences are 'What's for dinner?' and 'Dinner is at six.'"

She interpreted the former as, "Take care of me like mommy did, *plus*, I am paying for your services;" and the latter as, "Get right home from the office — no straying!" Everybody nicely wrapped."

The sentences amused me, and I decided to use them to write something light for this issue. But the more I wrote, the more the subject led back to reflect in the ongoing power struggles in today's political theater, the very subject I intended to avoid this time.

We think of power playing out on a national level, but it is everywhere, quotidian and pervasive. Go online, on Facebook, on the TV or radio; listen to your next door neighbor. You'll get an earful of ought-tos, shoulds, and musts about what the speaker would do if he/she were in power. But my friend is right: there's little as cold and unyielding, as

power-hungry and *controlling*, than sentences uttered among one's own lares and penates: home.

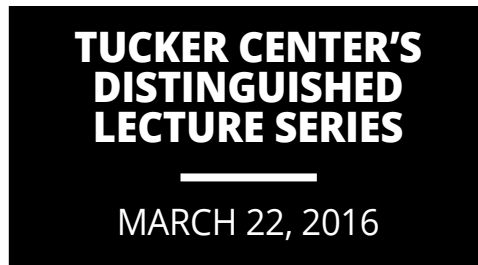
I started this piece as a comic relief from the ongoing presidential campaign clamor that will only worsen in the months leading up to November 8, but her amusing pronouncement brought me full circle to the realization that to some degree we all lust for dominion over at least one other, that we crave to have our own way. It's a human trait, and starts at birth with the solipsistic infant's wails to have its every need fulfilled: *now*.

Is it, for most of us, the dawning realization that one is not the center of the universe that, in time, tips us into acceptable, civilized behavior? What happens to the infant that never yields? The class bully who, as an adult, announces that God speaks through him and others must submit and obey?

It's surely a rich time for sociobiologist E.O. Wilson and other scientific investigators of his ilk. Even as I write, the power hungry are out and on the prowl, wailing, demanding to be fed. ■

## OUR LAVENDER

LAVENDER LENS | PHOTOS BY SOPHIA HANTZES





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### 12TH ANNUAL SOY NEW YEAR - "REFLECTIONS"

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*Charm*. Photo by Rich Ryan

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Shannon T.L. Kearns has been channeling trans experience into dramatic form in a way that sure sounds interesting. Kearns relates, “I’ve been out as transgender for a decade now and in that time, while transgender visibility has grown exponentially, there still haven’t been many stories told by transgender men about their own experiences. Not only that, so few stories are told that show transgender men as multifaceted people who are worthy of love. I wanted to tell a story about a complicated family, one where Jamie (played by myself) is part of the story but not the entire story. The relationship between Jamie and Alison (Ashley Hovell) is one that has rarely been seen before, one filled with struggle, but also love and support. The relationship between Jamie and his mom, Catherine (Susan Dempsey) is one

that will resonate with transgender people whose parents have struggled to accept their identity.”

Kearns continues, “Rounding out the family is Emily (Kira Pontiff), a young woman trying to understand not only her place in the world, but her place in her family. Jamie and Emily are both figuring out what it means to be adults and stand in their own truth. I wrote the story that I needed to see and offer it in the hope that it will not only inspire empathy and understanding in folks who might not be familiar with transgender people and their experiences, but also as a bold statement that transgender people can and will tell their own stories.”

### CHARM

Through May 8  
**Mixed Blood Theatre**  
 1401 S. 4th St., Minneapolis  
 612-338-6131  
[www.mixedblood.com](http://www.mixedblood.com)

Chicago’s Philip Dawkins, a playwright for queer content, has been taking his home town by storm, and this year it’s Minneapolis’s turn, with *Charm* at Mixed Blood, *Le Switch* at the Jungle, and *Dr. Seuss’ The Sneeches* at the Children’s Theatre. *Charm* is inspired by the real-life person of Mama Gloria Allen, a volunteer at the Center at Halsted in Chicago. For many of us across the age spectrum, the Halsted Street area is synonymous with queer, and is a destination in the same way Castro Street is in San Francisco and Christopher Street is in New York.

Mama Gloria Allen has nurtured, mentored, and supported impoverished and struggling youth with a range of sexual orientations and from transgender to cisgender. Mama Gloria herself states that the play is about adding “charmness” to one’s self. Mixed Blood’s production features Mizz June as Mama Darleen, based on Mama Gloria Allen. This production also includes Jay Eisenberg, star of last year’s Mixed Blood trans hit, *Hir*.

Director Addie Gorlin shares, “While the play addresses the clunkiness of progress and contemporary gender politics, it is ultimately about our collective humanity — that, no matter who we are, we unanimously share a desire to be seen, cared for, and loved.” *Charm* is also another example of Mixed Blood’s ongoing focus on plays that deal with queer issues from a very up-to-the-minute viewpoint.

### HARVEY

Through May 15  
**Guthrie Theater**  
 618 S. 2nd St., Minneapolis  
 612-377-2224  
[www.guthrietheater.org](http://www.guthrietheater.org)

Women playwrights of recent decades have come to signify weighty social and gender con-





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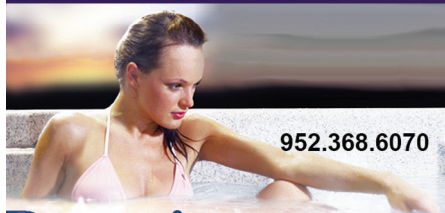
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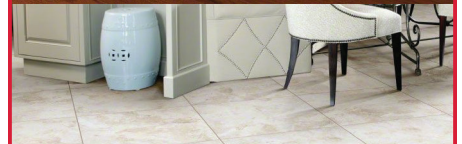
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*The Working Dead.* Photo by Dani Werner

sciousness that packs a real punch. Lynn Nottage and Sarah Ruhl, for example, have written powerful comedies that sharply confront the audience about things like sexual repression and structural racism in Old Hollywood. Obviously, these are substantive achievements and it's great to be living in a time where such issues are discussed openly from a female perspective.

But I think we must remember that a woman doesn't necessarily always have to have strongly stated views to make a play work brilliantly. It's very easy to dismiss *Harvey* by Denver journalist Mary Chase (1906–1981) as an unimportant piece of fluff. But au contraire! There's a reason why this amusing, seemingly "safe" play continues to appeal to a wide audience.

Chase's 1945 Pulitzer Prize-winner is a glowing triumph of the imagination. The main character is a giant rabbit who invades the ordinary world of ordinary Americans like an expanding of consciousness itself. The fantasy world that is now commonplace in film, television, and "magically realistic" stage, owes incalculably to Chase, proving that fantastical ideas can and will be accepted by an adult population. She draws from her Irish roots a Celtic fairy figure known as the pooka and comments whimsically on mental illness and institutions. No, it's not *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, but *Harvey* is sterling evidence that gentle humor put into play form by a masterful pen can prod us to look at serious social concerns and numinous mystical ideas. Even pagan ones!

## THE WORKING DEAD

Through June 11

Brave New Workshop, 824 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis  
612-332-6620

[www.bravenewworkshop.com](http://www.bravenewworkshop.com)

As someone born in the midsection of the 20th century I was told, as most of us were and still are, about how thor-

oughly I was conditioned by my family (parents especially) and then by my schools. Of course, there is legitimacy in those assertions, but as someone who joined the workforce early on, I can tell you that the workplace was and remains profoundly consequential to my whole way of existing and perceiving. It seems that psychiatrists and psychologists give this reality short shrift, but the region's premiere comedy theater, the Brave New Workshop, has begun an inquiry into this and I hope they continue to explore it in future revues.

The company-created *The Working Dead*, snappily directed by Caleb McEwen, is first and foremost a truly contemporary vision with rap, thoughts on how we ostracize smokers, how germs by those around us can seriously affect our well-being, and sick days. It revolves around a company called Dynocomuglobaltech, having morphed twice over from a company originally called Fingerhut, which of course, got a huge laugh from the boisterous audience the night I attended. Hu-

man happiness can be seriously compromised by mind-numbing routine and synapse-streamlining in service of tyrannical corporate gods and goddesses. So no wonder it sometimes seems like workers behave like zombies.

## BAD JEWS

April 30–May 22

Highland Park Center Theater  
1978 Ford Parkway, St. Paul  
651-647-4315

[www.brownpapertickets.com](http://www.brownpapertickets.com)

The division between a devout Jew and her secular cousin makes for juicy conflict in Joshua Harmon's acclaimed hit comedy, *Bad Jews*, at Minnesota Jewish Theater. Daphna (Miriam Schwarz) is a rabbinical student with an Israeli boyfriend. She is what's called in her community a "Super Jew." Her cousin, Liam (Michael Hanna), is disinterested in Judaism but secures a religious ornament used by their late grandfather. This understandably sets off Daphna, who has developed a deeper sense of the sacred. Worse yet, Liam missed their grandfather's funeral while he was skiing in Aspen.

Aside from the fact that this play itself has impressed audiences in other cities, it seems to be a great role for Schwarz; if you are unfamiliar with this sparkling young actress, here's your chance to see her in a role that promises to be perfectly suited to her. She reminds me of a young Barbra Streisand and was named *Lavender's Best Supporting Actress* last year for her performance in MJTC's terrific *Jericho*. Moreover, *Bad Jews* points to a harsher level of friction between Jews themselves. Ironically, Schwarz played the Jewish woman in *Jericho* who fiercely opposes Zionist zealotry. Here we get to see her play the opposite. To MJTC's great credit, they are airing a major conflict within their community that affects us all. ■



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## OUR SCENE

FOOD & DINING | BY ANDY LIEN | PHOTOS BY ANDY LIEN



The Hereford beef tenderloin served "Oliver Hardy" style; a place to slow down and take your time.



# How To Harbor View

Destination dining. Will travel for food. Just give me a reason and I'm in the car, on my way. When the cold is over and ice is gone, I'm often aiming my car toward the "West Coast" of Wisconsin along the Great River Road that hugs the Mississippi. If I go down to Winona on the Minnesota side and cross over to Wisconsin to make a large loop back up to the Twin Cities, I'll stop to enjoy a burger at The Monarch in Fountain City, a coffee and ice cream at Hotel DeVille in Alma (soon to have a new restaurant, The Empire Room!), a blueberry ice cream cone and some take-home cheese at the Nelson Creamery in Nelson, and a meal at the Harbor View Cafe in Pepin. OK, maybe not all in one day...but, OK, maybe. Or, if I start from the north and go south, there's always brunch at Chef Shack in Bay City (opening for the season the weekend after this issue comes out), baked goods from the Smiling Pelican Bakeshop in Maiden Rock, all sorts of delicious options at The Stockholm Pie Company in Stockholm, followed by a meal at Harbor View Cafe in Pepin. The Great River Road: destination dining at its finest.

You may have noticed that I mentioned Harbor View Cafe in Pepin twice. Because it's always on the list. I've been there for both lunch and dinner and heartily recommend both. It's a tremendously popular dining spot for people from the Twin Cities, so much so, that we're always looking around for people we know there. A path has been worn between here and there, and here are some tips for the trip.

### Enjoy the ride and see the sights.

One of the best parts about dining in Pepin, Wisconsin, is getting

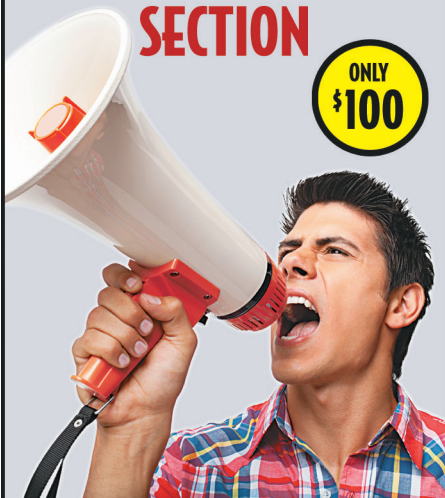
there. I've already talked about how I tend to make plenty of stops on my pilgrimage to Harbor View Cafe, but there's also plenty to be enjoyed if you're driving straight there and back. The views, the curves, the topography. Gosh, I love the sensual and subtle differences of traveling along the river, with bluffs and drops and diversity. One of the questions you have to consider is how you want to get there and back and much of the answer might have to do with what else is going on that weekend. This particular mid-April trip coincided with a Flood River Run that went from Prescott to Winona and involved countless motorcyclists who formed what was a parade at parts and a parking lot at others. Other trips have coincided with the weekend of 100 Miles of Garage Sales with some slow-moving traffic that stops frequently or the Fresh Art Tour that invites us to tour open art galleries along Lake Pepin. Stop and smell the flowers (or art or garage sales or motorcyclists) or feel free to take a faster, two-lane highway route via the Minnesota side, crossing over at Wabasha to Nelson and looping North to avoid the slower traffic. However you do it, skip the stress and get there with plenty of ease. Your stomach and taste buds will thank you.

### Get your name on the list and relish the wait.

Harbor View Cafe doesn't take reservations, but don't you fret. You can get your name on the list and enjoy your wait if you get there early enough in the day. No, seatings don't go on all day (if you're there as part of the lunch crowd) or night (with the supper rush) as the hours only go so late, so checking the hours for that particular day and meal as well as getting there on the early side are important. But, take it from



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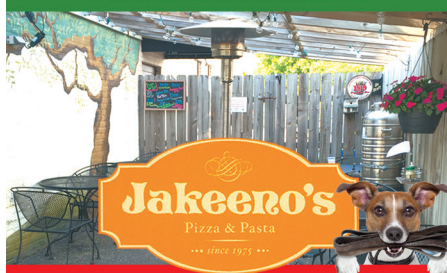


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me and my experience this past Saturday, you can get there at 4:00, put your name on the list for the 4:45 opening, and get in on the first seating. They're such pros with their process that the seating was handled like a roll call and smiles were abundant. It's not even disappointing to get there after they open and learn of a long wait. Last August, when told that there was an hour and a half wait, the answer was to happily add my name to the list, go wander down by the harbor at the river, come back to the Cafe, get some wine (and coffee for me), and sit in the adirondack chairs to listen to some live music as we sipped our libations and waited for our table. The town and view make for a lovely setting to be mindful of our surroundings and slow down a bit.

#### Check the menu on Facebook.

The menu changes every day for each meal. Perhaps they were pioneers of the chalkboard menu movement, as that's the only way you can learn of what's coming out of the kitchen, with one chalkboard in each of the two dining areas. There are sample menus on the website, but refer to the photo posts on their Facebook page for each day's specific offerings. I've enjoyed the coq au vin and Swedish meatballs at various times over the years, but actually look forward to visiting the Berkshire braised pork shank as if it were an old friend. That each entrée comes with a side of soup or salad is only a bonus and a delicious throwback to the less à la carte days of small plates and shareables.

That doesn't mean I don't share. I do. Especially if you order something I want to taste. It's just that these are full-on entrées that pack a punch as far as servings are concerned. If you order more than an entrée per person, be prepared to take some home, something which only allows the delight to linger longer. Actually, because I save room for dessert, I end up taking home some shank-to-go anyhow. It's all about strategy. This time, our dinner dabbling included the aforementioned shank that comes with golden and creamy mashed root vegetables as well as zingy kale, the Hereford beef tenderloin grilled "Oliver Hardy" style and smothered in mushrooms with accompanying asparagus and mashed potatoes, and the stuffed mushrooms that had cheese for days and came with a garlicky linguine. Each entrée came with a side salad or

soup, so we made our way through a caesar salad, a garden salad with peppercorn dressing, and a curried cauliflower soup, all of which were pleasing...and filling.

#### Save room for dessert. Or, just save a dessert.

I learned something long ago at Harbor View, and that's if you ask really nicely, they'll set aside a dessert for you. I didn't come upon this information organically, it didn't pop into my head one day, but I was talking over dessert options with my companion when the server said, "You know, if you're thinking about the almond cake, you might want me to set one aside for you. Those go fast." And we did. And the almond cake and I have been in love ever since. So, this time, like a pro, maybe even before I sat down, I asked for a piece of almond cake to be set aside for dessert. And I don't regret it one bit. And, hours later, I might have had a self-righteous grin on my face when I was informed that the groans of disappointment from the nearby table were in response to being told that the last piece of almond cake had just been sold and they had to order something else. It's that good.

As are the rest of the desserts. But, because my heritage is Nordic and we tend to daub almond extract behind our ears instead of perfume, the almond cake sings a siren song to me, with its chewy texture, whipped cream relief, and lingonberry accent. The sticky toffee cake is my second favorite dessert from the menu, followed by the caramel custard and the bittersweet chocolate torte. Really, there's no loser, even if you miss out on the almond cake. In this case, a miss doesn't necessarily mean a loss.

The season is new, the months ahead of us are many. Make your plans and take your trip to Harbor View Cafe in Pepin, Wisconsin. Take it easy, get dessert, bring home leftovers, and don't forget to take in the view. ■

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# THE ROAD TO NASHVILLE: RUGBY'S BINGHAM CUP

BY SHANE LUECK



## THE MAYHEM TEAM



Photos by Hubert Bonnet

At the end of the day, we do our best work with those who are brave enough to show up to their first practice and make the commitment to learn the laws of rugby.

Mark Bingham was a fantastic role model, not only for the gay community, but for anyone who searches for acceptance and finds it in an unexpected place. Bingham's search for acceptance led him to the rugby pitch. After he came out, he kept returning to rugby because that was where he felt the most comfortable.

Building teams for gay men in San Francisco and New York is how he gave back to his community until he gave the ultimate sacrifice and saved countless lives by taking down Flight 93 on 9/11 in 2001. He was one of a group of passengers who took amazing measures to attack the hijackers, which eventually led to them crashing the plane into a vacant field in Pennsylvania instead of its targets in Washington, D.C.

At the time of Mark Bingham's tragic death, only six gay and inclusive rugby clubs existed worldwide. Two of those were co-founded by Mark. Today there are almost 60 clubs. Named in his honor, the Bingham Cup is the biennial global event that promotes rugby as an inclusive non-discriminatory sport in a non-professional, gay rugby union tournament.

"We all have safe spaces, Mark Bingham's was on the rugby pitch," says Joe Thorson, the Minneapolis Mayhem's social chair. "The gay stereotype has been under assault for many years; if anything, Mark's promotion of rugby to gay men helped speed that up. We do our best to be inclusive within our team. Our club is open to gay men, straight men, and those who identify as men. Rugby takes all shapes and sizes and we do well

to accommodate most."

Bingham is quoted as saying his rugby team has the opportunity to be role models for other gay folks. And Thorson says, once you become familiar with rugby, it becomes so obvious that gay men would find acceptance and thrive in the sport. "I re-watched *Paris is Burning* recently and concluded that I was the drag mother to a horde of young rugby players," he says. "The gay experience is so much about finding acceptance within yourself and then finding a family to help you thrive. That could be a drag mother helping you learn how to put on makeup for the first time, or a seasoned player teaching you how to take a big hit, brush yourself off and get ready for the next one."

He continues, "We strive to have a positive impact in our community through the fundraising we do for the Special Olympics and work partnering with The Aliveness Project. At the end of the day, we do our best work with those who are brave enough to show up to their first practice and make the commitment to learn the laws of rugby. If we do anything for the community, we do our best to make our players better people on and off the pitch."

That commitment to each other and the the community carries over to the Bingham Cup, an event that Thorson calls the World Cup of gay rugby. Every International Gay Rugby member team in good standing is welcome to participate. After hosting the tournament in 2010, Minneapolis Mayhem sent players to Manchester in 2012 and Sydney in 2014. Now, with the Bing-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26 ➔

WE DO OUR BEST TO MAKE OUR PLAYERS BETTER PEOPLE ON AND OFF THE PITCH.







## THAT COMMITMENT TO THE GAME AND EACH OTHER IS PART OF WHY THE MAYHEM HAS

ham Cup returning to North American soil, the Mayhem is sending an entire team to Nashville at the end of May.

"You get to spend a whole week with a group of people who understand you and understand rugby; it is an empowering experience. You make friends you will keep for a lifetime," Thorson says. "Our number one goal with every match is to go out, have fun, and give it everything you have so there are no regrets off the pitch. That won't change with Bingham, but we do have to be open to other styles of play."

That commitment to the game and each other is part of why the Mayhem has experienced significant growth in the past couple years. Thorson says there is a spot on the team for players and non-players, with social membership being just as important to the health of the club as its playing members.

"We are a very social team," he says. "We strive to be inclusive so

players of all orientations feel welcome. Our team's success comes from active recruiting and having social events that build community and empower our members. I think we excel at both."

With the explosion of popularity for the sport in North America, there has been a big push to grow it in Minnesota through the Minnesota Youth Rugby Association, for which Thorson and the Mayhem are thankful. "As much as we would like to take credit for the attention the sport is receiving, it is the larger rugby community that helped us become a stable member of the Minnesota Rugby Union," he says.

Following the Mayhem's performance in the Bingham Cup, fans can look for them this summer at Pride. Stay up to date with the team on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/MayhemRFC](http://www.facebook.com/MayhemRFC)) and see what they have planned for Pride Sunday in the park. Thorson says, "Our bridesmaid/prom dress rugby exhibition matches after the parade are a hoot!"





6 EXPERIENCED SIGNIFICANT GROWTH IN THE PAST COUPLE YEARS.





# WALKING WITH THE PRIME

BY SHANE LUECK

➔ "PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES LIKE THIS ARE ACCESSIBLE TO THE DIVERSE MEMBERSHIP

## THE PRIME TIMERS

The research regarding the benefits of health and fitness is undeniable. We all know the cost of unhealthy living. Older folks, including GLBT folks, didn't grow up with health and fitness as a priority in their life, says Harry Hartigan. As a member of Prime Timers MSP for nearly two decades, Hartigan is the visionary behind Boomer Town at Pride and currently serves as Prime Timers' outreach and education chair.

"Fitness was for the wealthy and privileged and there was not the availability of fitness centers or health and fitness information," Hartigan says. "Today the fitness options are within reach for most people. Seniors with certain health coverage have some great fitness benefits, such as Silver Sneakers."

Over the years, Hartigan has seen Prime Timers members struggle with health issues from high blood pressure to weight and diabetes, and from stroke and mobility issues to depression. After several members talked about how to improve health while being safe and having fun, they discovered the Mall of America opens early and welcomes walkers of all ability levels. Hartigan describes the MOA as an ideal location as it is safe (no ice, snow, extreme heat), bright, inviting, and centrally located for most folks.

"We felt it was important to have some social activities that promoted a healthy lifestyle and provided an opportunity for people to get out and about in a safe environment," Hartigan says. "Physical activities like this are accessible to the diverse membership we have and let us have fun and socialize while getting a work out."

This camaraderie is evident even from the group's inception. The inter-generational organization for older gay or bisexual men



Photos by Harry Hartigan

(and younger adult men who admire mature men) was created by Woody Baldwin. He felt a wide gap existed in society, which caters almost exclusively to youth. Baldwin began the Boston chapter in 1987 by placing ads in local newspapers and soliciting his many friends, expecting only a small handful of men to attend the first meeting and was surprised when over 40 showed up, indicating a need for social and cultural organizations to aid and support the aging gay and bisexual men. Now Prime Timers has grown to over forty chapters worldwide, located throughout North America, Europe and Australia.

The Minneapolis chapter offers many more opportunities for members to get out and enjoy each other's company while getting some exercise. Along with a bowling event and biking adventures, the group also has The History Boys, which finds members exploring various places of interest in the Metro area.

But, of course, many people know Prime Timers from Boomer Town. "Prime Timers MSP is proud to represent the growing population of mature gay and bisexual men and their admirers in the AARP Boomer Town area of the Twin Cities Pride Festival," Hartigan says. "At the Prime Timers MSP booth, our members will be providing information about the group, our activities, events, and goals. We also hope to raise awareness about the community and issues facing those in the prime of their lives. And of course, our membership will be out and about enjoying this great event." ■

For more information about joining Prime Timers MSP and its various events, head to [www.primetimersmsp.com](http://www.primetimersmsp.com). Or, reach out to the organization at [info@primetimersmsp.com](mailto:info@primetimersmsp.com) or 612-371-9537.



# TIMERS

WE HAVE AND LET US HAVE FUN AND SOCIALIZE WHILE GETTING A WORK OUT."

**THE PRIME TIMERS**







BALL	STRIKE	OUT
GUEST	4	HOME
7	NG	3

HITTING IT OUT OF THE PARK

# NORTH STAR CLASSIC

BY SHANE LUECK





## THE NORTH STAR CLASSIC



If you ask tournament director Josh Hausmann, there are two things that separate the North Star Classic from other gay tournaments: the amazing partnership from the bars and the experience that the Twin Cities is able to provide.

The Saloon, which has been a supporter of the league since its founding in 1979, is the host of the tournament's registration party on Friday. You'll also see bartenders from the Saloon helping sell drinks at the fields on Saturday and Sunday and the go-go dancers have been known to make an appearance there as well. EagleBOLtbar hosts the closing party on Sunday night and they provide all the tournament participants with an amazing pig roast feast as well as an awards ceremony hosted by the hilarious Lucy Stooile.

"Both bars really go out of their way to show everyone a great time," Hausmann says. "We are also lucky to have two great softball facilities that are a mile apart in Eagan. This year we'll be using 12 fields and so we're able to have a large tournament and have it finish at a reasonable time. Our host hotel, the Crowne Plaza, is downtown and within walking distance to both the opening and closing parties and we're able to secure an incredible rate for our out-of-town guests. Our tournament committee is outstanding and completely on top of every detail which helps our tournament run very smoothly. All in all, people always have great things to say about our tournament."

Hosted annually by the Twin Cities Goodtime Softball League over Memorial Day weekend, the North Star Classic is open to all of the C and D division gay softball teams across North America. "We invite teams from all 42 leagues that are a member of the North American Gay Amateur Athletic Alliance (NAGAAA), but anyone is welcome to register," Hausmann says. "Last year we even had gay teams from Des Moines and Omaha that are not a part of NAGAAA. We love getting as many teams from across the U.S. and Canada as possible as it gives teams in our league a chance to meet and play against teams they don't normally see."

Last year, the TCGSL introduced the B division into the North Star Classic with great success. Unfortunately, NAGAAA's annual A and B division tournament, called the NAGAAA Cup, is being held over Memorial Day this year and the North Star Classic committee decided to forego the B division for 2016. According to Hausmann, nearly 90 percent of the teams across North America play in the C or D division so getting enough teams in the A and B divisions to come is difficult, which is why the North Star Classic only recently opened up to the B division.

However, leagues can bid to host the NAGAAA Cup, and the TCGSL are looking to bring it to the Twin Cities within the next couple of years. Because there are only 10 teams across the country that are in the A division, one of which is in the Twin Cities, only a couple tournaments are large enough to host an A division.

The Twin Cities Goodtime Softball League first hosted a tournament in 1981, two years after the league was founded, over Fourth of July weekend. The tournament was held every two years and eventually the North Star Classic name was added and the timing was moved to Memorial Day weekend. The North Star Classic has grown as the Twin Cities Goodtime Softball League has grown; Hausmann says this year the tournament is hosting 48 teams, compared to 16 in its first year.

"The North Star Classic is not only a softball tournament, but also a great social event," Hausmann says. "It gives the teams in our league an opportunity to meet and play teams from all across North America. This year, we're expecting about 22 of the 38 TCGSL teams and another 25 teams from out of town to participate. With about 500 people in attendance at [the opening and closing parties], it's one way we are able to thank our sponsor bars that support us through both the TCGSL season and the North Star Classic."

With teams coming from all over, Hausmann credits the excitement from teams and fans of the North Star Classic to being able to see friends from out of town. Some teams come back year after year, and Hausmann says it's not just playing a team from out of town, it's playing a team full of friends that you've known for many years through softball.

Of course, being in Minnesota, the weather doesn't always cooperate. Hausmann talks about a joke within the tournament committee that the weather only cooperates every other year. "One year it was above 90 degrees, and then the next year it was in the 50s," he says. "Two years ago we had the most perfect weather imaginable, and last year we played the last three games in steady rain. Memorial Day actually works pretty well for us though, as most people have Monday off of work and it falls about halfway through our season."

The committee has looked at moving the tournament back to the Fourth of July, but there's a greater possibility of it being exceedingly hot and humid and the holiday doesn't always fall on a weekend. "Believe it or not, Minneapolis is actually warmer than Boston and Seattle over Memorial Day," Hausmann says.

As the director, Hausmann is excited to have teams from new cities register for the tournament. This year, Hausmann welcomes a team from Los Angeles and one from Fort Lauderdale. "When you can get people from southern California and Florida to take their vacation in Minnesota, you know you're doing something right," he jokes. "There are always things we look to improve every year and raise the bar, but we're already known for having an extremely well-run tournament. That's a huge testament to the tournament committee members who come back year after year to put on a great event. I've only been involved the last two years and I'm so impressed with the level of dedication everyone has in order to have a great tournament." ■

"THE NORTH STAR CLASSIC IS NOT ONLY A SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT, BUT ALSO A GREAT SOCIAL EVENT."





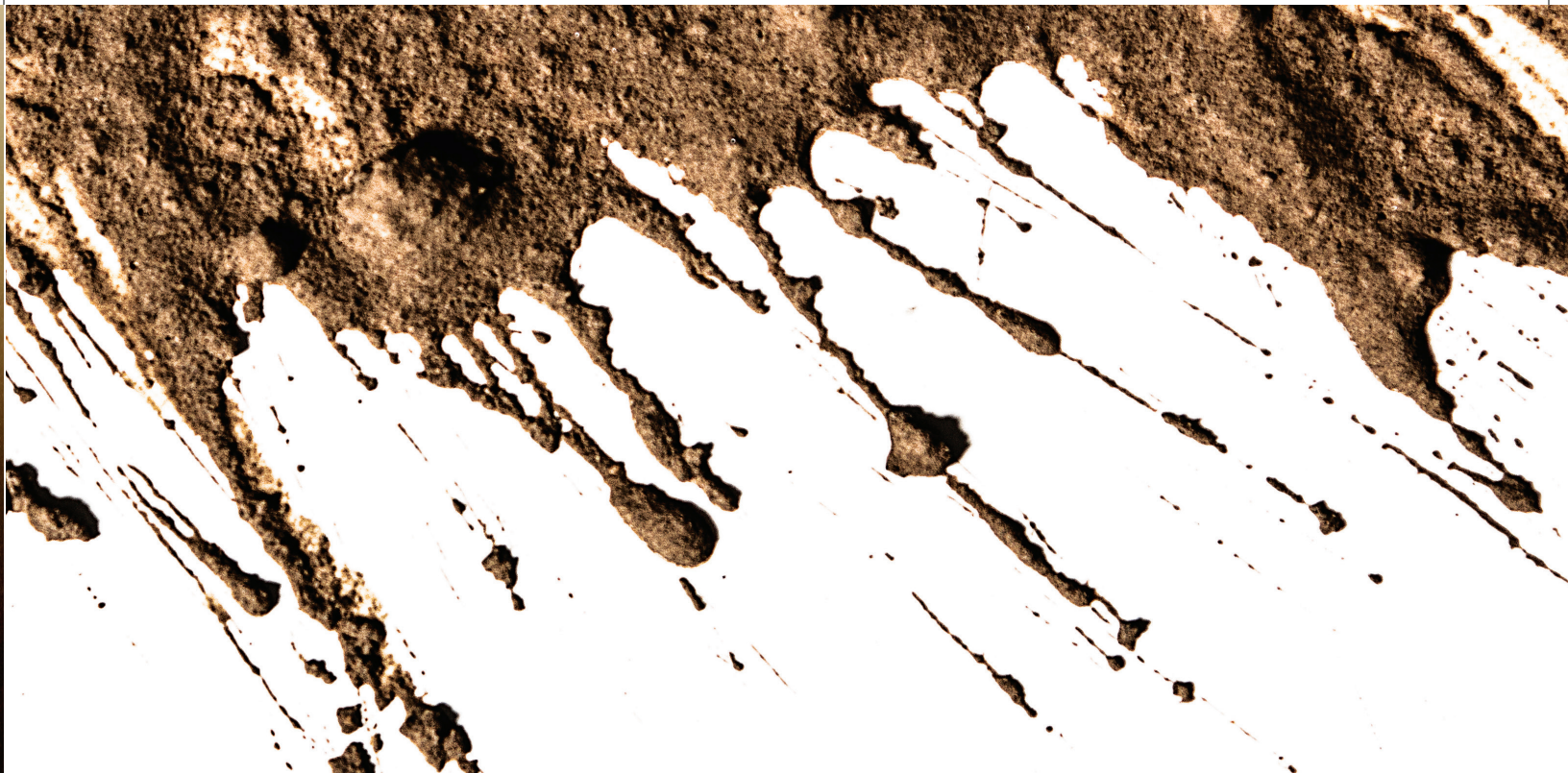


# COMMUNITY SPORTS DIRECTORY

BY ANDY LIEN

The Twin Cities area is home to a remarkable number of athletes who identify as members of the GLBT community. The sports range from soccer to basketball to quidditch, the teams are all welcoming and hard-working. Whether you want to join a sport or watch a sport, here's a listing of what's out there and where to find out more about the local sports scene.





## BASKETBALL

### Women's Silver Fox Basketball League

Women (age 40+)  
GLBT Specific? No  
Season: Year-round  
Website: [www.ywcamps.org/fitness/womens\\_basketball\\_leagues](http://www.ywcamps.org/fitness/womens_basketball_leagues)

## BOWLING

### Funday Monday Bowling League

Co-Ed  
GLBT Specific? GLBT + Ally  
Season: 12 weeks, beginning in Jan.  
Website: [www.midwayprobowl.com](http://www.midwayprobowl.com)

### Hump Day Bowlers

Co-Ed  
GLBT Specific? GLBT + Ally  
Season: Sept.–March  
Website: [www.humpdaybowlers.com](http://www.humpdaybowlers.com)

### Twin Cities Friday League

Co-Ed  
GLBT Specific? GLBT + Ally  
Season: Sept. – April  
Website: [www.midwayprobowl.com](http://www.midwayprobowl.com)

### Wednesday Rainbow League

Co-Ed  
GLBT Specific? GLBT + Ally  
Season: Sept.–April  
Website: [www.facebook.com/WednesdayRainbowLeague](http://www.facebook.com/WednesdayRainbowLeague)

## FOOTBALL

### Minnesota Machine

Women  
GLBT Specific? No  
Season: April–June  
Website: [www.mnmachine.com](http://www.mnmachine.com)

### Minnesota Vixen

Women  
GLBT Specific? No  
Season: April–June  
Website: [www.mnvixen.com](http://www.mnvixen.com)

## GOLF

### Womyn's Twilight Golf League

Women  
GLBT Specific? Yes  
Season: Summer  
Website: N/A

## OUTDOOR RECREATION

### Outwoods

Co-Ed  
GLBT Specific? Yes  
Season: Year-round  
Website: [www.meetup.com/Outwoods/](http://www.meetup.com/Outwoods/)

## QUIDDITCH

### TC Frost

Co-Ed  
GLBT Specific? No  
Season: Year-round  
Website: [www.facebook.com/tcfrostquidditch](http://www.facebook.com/tcfrostquidditch), [www.usquidditch.org](http://www.usquidditch.org)

## ROLLER DERBY

### TC Terrors — Minnesota Men's Roller Derby

Men  
GLBT Specific? No  
Season: Nov.–April  
Website: [www.tcterrors.com](http://www.tcterrors.com)

### Minnesota RollerGirls

Women  
GLBT Specific? No  
Season: Oct.–April  
Website: [www.mnrollergirls.com](http://www.mnrollergirls.com)

### North Star Roller Girls

Women  
GLBT Specific? No  
Season: Nov.–March  
Website: [www.northstarrollergirls.com](http://www.northstarrollergirls.com)

## RUGBY

### Mayhem RFC

Men  
GLBT Specific? GLBT + Ally  
Season: April–Oct.  
Website: [www.mayhemrfc.com](http://www.mayhemrfc.com)

### Minnesota Valkyries Rugby

Women  
GLBT Specific? No  
Season: Aug.–June  
Website: [www.valkyriesrugby.org](http://www.valkyriesrugby.org)

## RUNNING/WALKING

### MSP Frontrunners

Running  
Co-Ed  
GLBT Specific? Yes  
Season: Year-round  
Website: [www.mspfrontrunners.org](http://www.mspfrontrunners.org)

### Prime Timers MSP

Walking  
Men  
GLBT Specific? Yes  
Season: Year-round  
Website: [www.primetimersww.org/ptmsp](http://www.primetimersww.org/ptmsp)

## SOCCER

### Twin Cities Jacks

Co-Ed  
GLBT Specific? Yes  
Season: Pick-up: May–Oct., League play: Year-round  
Website: [www.tcjacks.org](http://www.tcjacks.org)

## SOFTBALL

### Northern Lights Softball League

Women  
GLBT Specific? Yes  
Season: May–Aug.  
Website: [www.facebook.com/nlws1.twincities](http://www.facebook.com/nlws1.twincities)

### Twin Cities Goodtime Softball League

Men  
GLBT Specific? Yes  
Season: April–Aug.  
Website: [www.tcgs1.leagueapps.com](http://www.tcgs1.leagueapps.com)

## TENNIS

### GLASS Tennis

Co-Ed  
GLBT Specific? Yes  
Season: Year-round  
Website: [www.glassports.org](http://www.glassports.org)

## VOLLEYBALL

### GLASS Volleyball

Co-Ed  
GLBT Specific? Yes  
Season: Year-round  
Website: [www.glassports.org](http://www.glassports.org) ■

*We are modifying this list of sports organizations as is needed. If you have a sport you'd like to add to the list, please send the information to managing editor, Andy Lien, at [andy@lavendermagazine.com](mailto:andy@lavendermagazine.com).*



# PLAYING FOR THE OTHER TEAM DEAR ABBY

BY NELL GELHAUS

*Dear Abby,  
Why didn't you take an Uber?  
Sincerely,  
Disappointed Fans Everywhere*

Another week, another celebrity athlete DUI. Another red-eyed mugshot. Another fallen idol. Only this time it was one of our own. One of our best. On April 3, women's soccer legend Abby Wambach ran a red light and was arrested for driving under the influence of intoxicants in her hometown of Portland, Ore. And if that wasn't troubling enough, she then allegedly admitted to police during questioning that she'd experimented with drugs when she was younger. Our Abby, who advocates passionately for GLBT issues and equal pay for women. Abby, who had a Barbie made in her likeness to showcase diversity in body image. Abby, who kissed her beautiful wife on national television after winning the FIFA Women's World Cup.

Abby screwed up. Big time. Running a red light, she's lucky she didn't kill someone.

But this column isn't about pointing fingers and placing blame. It's not for me to speculate on why Wambach chose to drink so much on that particular night, why she attempted to drive, or what her relationship with alcohol might be. She will deal with any personal and legal ramifications that manifest. I also by no means wish to trivialize the dangers of drunk driving. It would take more than a magazine column to attempt to convey the enormity of the loss of a family member.

No, instead we need to have a separate conversation. We need to use this opportunity to talk about the prevalence of substance abuse in our community and consider what can be done to respond to it.

A national study\* indicates that GLBT youth are already at risk. Compared with their peers, GLBT youth are twice as likely to abuse drugs and alcohol, and are more likely to continue heavy drinking into their later years. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the rate of substance abuse disorders within the GLBT community is between 20 and 30 percent, which is two or three times higher than that of the general population (nine percent). Three times! What are we doing?

To be fair, this isn't entirely our fault. These same studies have shown that anti-gay bias and discrimination have played a part, resulting in harmful attempts at self-medication. This, and the fact that most social activities in our community revolve around alcohol consumption: Pride events, fundraisers, sports leagues, and the plethora of gay bars to which we've historically flocked as the only place to meet other gay people. The gay rights movement even began in a bar. The Stonewall Inn, to be exact. Substance abuse, or at least excessive alcohol con-

sumption is practically a part of our history, our culture, our DNA.

I know you know this. But what we don't think about often enough is how dangerous it is. As Abby reminded us, sitting at the apex of your career, being happily married with wealth and fame — none of that makes us immune to being at risk for substance abuse. We're culturally predisposed, whether we like it or not. So where's the fine line between enjoying ourselves, and stepping over into harmful and potentially perilous decisions? What can we do to be more aware?

Individually, there's the CAGE screening. We can start by asking ourselves the following four questions:

1. Have you ever felt the need to Cut down on your drinking?
2. Have people Annoyed you by criticizing your drinking?
3. Have you ever felt Guilty about drinking?
4. Have you ever felt you needed a drink first thing in the morning (Eye-opener) to get rid of a hangover?

Clinically, answering yes to two or more of these questions is considered a positive screen for substance abuse.

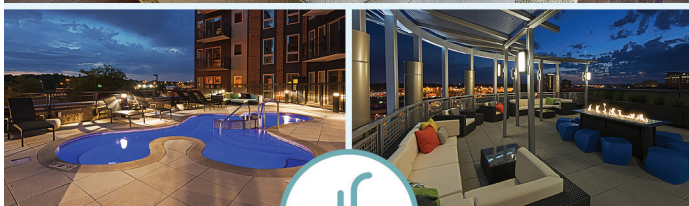
As a community, it's time we move one step further. GLBT discrimination still exists, but certainly not to the extent as for those who came before us. #ItsNotOver, but it's getting better. We can move our meetings out of the bars. (You know, those meetings where we talk about the gay agenda. I kid.) We can promote and take part in educational initiatives designed to eliminate homophobia. We can train community-based agencies and programs on GLBT cultural competencies and substance abuse risk factors. We can work together to provide GLBT youth a safer and sober place to gather.

Finally, dear Abby, dear friends, call a cab. Hey, buddy, I get it. You go out with your friends and unexpectedly: three-for-ones! I've been there. Think ahead and plan your ride. Let (or make) somebody crash on your couch. Bring back adult sleepovers. Hold one another accountable. Or just hold one another, whatever happens at adult sleepovers.

Maybe it's because I've passed a few milestone birthdays, or because I'm focused on starting a family, but I've started to consider legacy, both what I want to leave and what we might leave collectively as a community. We may not have legions of young soccer star wannabes fixated on our every move, but we certainly have GLBT youth following in our footsteps, just as we have taken our cues from older generations. What will we be known for? Let it be marriage equality, transgender rights, bullying initiatives. Not red-eyed mugshots and mea culpas. ■

\*Marshal, M. P., Friedman, M. S., Stall, R., King, K. M., Miles, J., Gold, M. A., et al. (2008). Sexual orientation and adolescent substance use: A meta-analysis and methodological review. *Addiction*, 103(4), 546-556.





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## OUR LIVES

BOOKS | BY SHANE LUECK | PHOTO BY HUBERT BONNET

# Quatrefoil Celebrates 30 Years

CONTINUED ON PAGE 38 ➔



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"I was once told that Dick Hewetson and David Irwin, the founders of the library, did not set out to create a legacy when they first opened the library," says Scott Breyfogle. "I think it is a testament to both Dick and David that the library has been around for 30 years."

As the former president of Quatrefoil Library's board of directors from 2010–2015, Breyfogle says whenever you approach a milestone, it's a good time for reflection.

Named after the book *Quatrefoil* by James Barr published in 1950, the first modern book to portray homosexuals positively, the Quatrefoil Library is the fulfillment of a dream for the late David Irwin. In the mid-1970s both he and Dick Hewetson started collecting gay-themed books, housing their collections in a linen closet. As David continued to buy more books, the collection soon outgrew the "closet."

David and Dick's long-time idea of starting a lending library was realized when Matthew Stark, executive director of the Minnesota Civil Liberties Union, invited the Quatrefoil Library to be a tenant in MCLU's new building on West Broadway in North Minneapolis. The library opened there on February 4, 1986.

Since its opening, the collection has experienced unprecedented growth, so much so that the demand and use of the library soon outgrew the facilities. The library reopened at the renovated Richards Gordon School on June 6, 1987, with more than 4,000 volumes and over 300 periodicals. The collection continues to grow, now consisting of over 10,000 books, 1,000 DVDs, periodicals, and sound recordings. The library reopened its doors in a new venue once again on November 1, 2013, and now has 2,700 square feet, which is double the size it had at the Richards Gordon Office Building in St. Paul.

"I used to say that the library is a best-kept secret and now I regret it," Breyfogle says. "Does everyone know about the library? No, but the library is well-known. The academic community knows about the library, they have been sending students to us for years for GLBT research because they know the Quatrefoil Library's collection is so unique."

Authors are also familiar with the library. Will Fellows used resources from Quatrefoil to write his book *Gay Bar: The Fabulous, True Story of a Daring Woman and Her Boys in the 1950s*. And that awareness is only going to grow as more and more members of the community place emphasis on recording and remembering our history. The Twin Cities hosts countless artifacts and records of GLBT history, and Quatrefoil is a part of that.

"In addition to the Quatrefoil Library, the Twin Cities is also the home to the Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection; I think that puts the Twin Cities in a really unique position," Breyfogle says. "To have the

Quatrefoil Library, the second oldest GLBT lending library in the country, and the Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection, one of the best GLBT archives in the country, just a few files apart. Both organizations are committed to promoting each other and we have co-sponsored a number of events together."

But the longevity of the library Breyfogle attributes to the GLBT community in Minnesota. "We have a vibrant and supportive community here. Do I wish they were all members? Yes, I do," he says. "While not everyone might be a member, I know many people have provided financial support to the Quatrefoil Library over the years because they understand what an important resource it is. We are very grateful to those individuals."

Although there are no plans to move again, the library's board is still looking toward the future. According to Breyfogle, the main hurdle facing public and private libraries today is figuring out how to adapt and decide what the modern library looks like.

"Libraries are becoming more known for the services they offer and what they can provide the community," he says. "It seems libraries are becoming the de-facto community centers. One of the reasons the Quatrefoil Library moved was so we had more space to expand our programming."

With game nights, book clubs for every walk of life, support groups, and more, there is something for everyone at the Quatrefoil Library. For example, workshops on a number of topics including one on long-term financial planning are very well attended and received. The programs the library hosts are open to the public; you don't need to be a member to attend.

The quality and amount of programing is astounding when you consider the fact that the library is 100 percent volunteer without a single paid position on staff. All of the volunteers take great pride in the work the library does, and Breyfogle invites everyone to check out the library's new space and consider becoming a member or a volunteer.

"I stepped down from the board at the start of the year," he adds. "I know the current board president, Mitch Marks, and the rest of the board are examining the future of the library. Whatever decisions they make, I am confident the Quatrefoil Library will continue to be part of the greater Twin Cities GLBT community for years to come." ■

To stay up to date on the library's programs and events, including a 30th anniversary celebration on October 13, 2016, visit [www.qlibrary.org](http://www.qlibrary.org) and follow the library on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/QuatrefoilLibrary](http://www.facebook.com/QuatrefoilLibrary).





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# 2016 Infiniti QX50



When you miss the mark, you get another chance to redeem yourself.

This is the story of the 2016 Infiniti QX50 in a nutshell. It really is a solid offering for Infiniti, yet it has not been given a fair shake in the marketplace. Premium buyers always choose German over anything else, so models, such as the QX50, are simply left on lots untouched.

That is, until now. The QX50 received a major update that has helped its cause greatly. In month-over-year sales, the QX50 had seen gains of almost 600 percent. The reasons are simple: these vast improvements are indeed working in Infiniti's favor.

Before I dive into how Nissan's luxury compact crossover has improved, let us go back a few years. The QX50 first arrived as a 2008 model known as the EX35. It shares the same platform as the old G/Q40/Q60 models, as well as the extended platform for the Q70 and QX70. The EX/QX50 is also sold as a Nissan Skyline back in Japan, the origin of Infiniti's most popular models of all time, the G35/37.

One would assume that the EX would be as popular as its sedan and coupe brothers. This is where it gets a bit muddy. Consumers in this segment are tough on anything that does not resemble a BMW X3 or an Audi Q5. The EX/QX50 was also saddled with a few issues, chiefly tight rear seat space that also limited cargo expansion.

To address this and other issues, Infiniti rolled out a new QX50. This time, they addressed the rear seat space issue by extending the wheelbase; in essence, sending the longer wheelbase version sold in key markets outside of North America here. They also worked on the details, such as distinguishing the QX50 from the now defunct Q40/Q60 models.

Do these changes make the QX50 a better competitor in one of the toughest segments in the marketplace?

At first glance, making the QX50 more distinguished than previous models was indeed the right move to make. While it gains the mesh grille now seen across the Infiniti lineup, it also got some tougher details, such as a more aggressive lower grille and front bumper, beefier wheel

arches, and enhanced lighting front and rear.

The longer wheelbase makes the QX50 look accessible. The rear doors are a bit wider than before, making rear seat access no longer a chore. The rear liftgate does open high for a tall person to load into the cargo hold without bending down. This is something not achievable on some of the QX50's competitors. In all, the QX50 offers a fastback look that encourages more practical pursuits.

Once inside, one wondered why the cabin has not changed from previous EX/QX50 models. One needs to sit in the back seat to understand that real change: rear seat room. Headroom is excellent, but you do feel the difference in leg room. This is a space where four six-footers can enjoy the ride in seats that have a perfect leather feel to them, along with some nice comfort. There is enough contouring that locks in front occupants.

Looking ahead, there is a feeling that some of the latest Infiniti interior elements did not get handed over to the QX50. In some cases, that could be a good thing. The instrument panel has some updates, even though it can trace its roots to the G sedan; remember, these two are related. One could complain for the lack of a TFT information screen or cleaner controls, but when things do work why sweat the small stuff? One may be put off by the plethora of controls below the infotainment touchscreen. They may be confusing at first, but they are indeed logical and functional for the navigation system.

Its fastback design hides about 18.5 cubic feet of cargo behind the second row of seats. Although it seems small, it actually can pack plenty for a good yield of shopping or a solid road trip. The rear seats fold down for more space for longer cargo. Our tester had 11 Bose speakers on board to fill this cabin with sweet music.

Under the hood is the VQ37 3.7-liter V6. This is one of the better engines Infiniti (and Nissan) makes. With 325 horsepower on tap, the 4,000 pound QX50 AWD model has plenty of power to run with. This engine is connected to a 7-speed automatic transmission feeding to all four wheels on our AWD



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tester. Fuel economy is within range of the class, with an EPA estimated fuel consumption average of 17 MPG in the city, 24 MPG on the highway.

For a vehicle of its size and function, the ride quality was pretty decent. There was some suspension play on rougher surfaces, but not enough to cause concern for those demanding a smooth ride all of the time. Handling is controlled with minimal lean and roll through the corners, almost like the old G/Q40. Steering is quite good and rather precise. Braking is quite good, too. Normal and panic stops showed solid behavior over good braking distances.

In terms of safety, the QX50 is available with several key features, such as Lane Departure Warning, Lane Departure Prevention, Blind Spot Warning, Forward Collision Warning, Intelligent Cruise Control and Intelligent Brake Assist. These are wrapped up in the highly desirable Technology Package, which is the most desirable spec to have on the QX50.

Another thing that makes the QX50 an attractive buy is the pricing. Though it starts at \$34,450 for a rear-drive model, all-wheel drive models

start at \$35,850. Where the value comes into play is when you spec one out with all of the packages. When all of the boxes are ticked, an AWD QX50 will come with a sticker price of \$44,495. Most of the QX50's competitors simply blow through this price threshold, even beyond \$50,000 when equipped equally to the top spec QX50.

One reason for the QX50's surge in sales is that it is an overall good value for the money. In its class, the more you pay, the better you feel about your vehicle and the prestige it embodies. Yet, one forgets what the QX50 is all about; it's a premium crossover, yes, but there's a lot more to it.

How many premium small crossovers have a V6 standard these days? How many premium crossovers of its kind had sporty looks with some ruggedness underneath it? And, how many premium crossovers in its class can you get fully loaded for under \$45,000? All of this is what I call redemption!

If the 2016 Infiniti QX50 fits your lifestyle, it is a smart choice to make for your next crossover. Just think of the savings by choosing this over everything else in its class. That is one thing that does not miss the mark. ■





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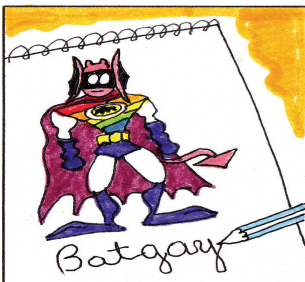
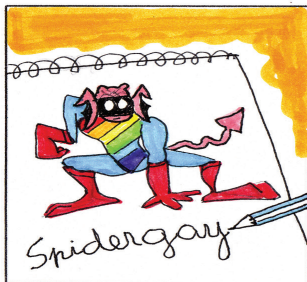
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## ADVERTISER INDEX

### Adult

MegaMates.....45  
Squirt - PressNet, Inc.....44

### Automotive

Luther Infiniti of Bloomington.....42  
Borton Volvo.....41  
Kline Nissan.....42  
LaMettry's Collision.....44  
Carousel Porsche.....43  
Rosedale Chevrolet.....41

### Bars & Nightlife

19 Bar.....43  
eagleBOLTbar.....45  
Gay 90's.....43

### Beverages

Lakeside Wine & Spirits.....21  
Lowry Hill Liquors.....21

### Event Venues & Services

D'Amico & Partners.....21

### Events

Lavender First Thursdays.....35  
Lavender's Out in the Stands.....19  
Lavender's Pride Thursday.....51  
Lavender's Score Thursdays.....37

### Financial

ROR Tax Professionals.....41

### Grocery Stores

Whole Foods Market.....23

### Health & Wellness

Dr. Paul Amble DDS?.....2  
CDC.....2  
Central Medical Clinic PLLC.....9  
Matrix AdvoCare Network.....17  
Mill District Dental.....7  
Northland Therapy Center.....11  
University of Minnesota, Infectious Diseases.....5

### Home Furnishings & Accessories

Merriment Adornments.....17  
Habitation.....11

### Home Services

C.A.P. Carpet & Flooring.....17  
House Lift Remodeler.....11

### Insurance

Bartell, Dawn.....6

### Jewelry

Hoff Diamonds.....10  
JB Hudson Jewelers.....9  
Max's.....6  
Scheherazade Jewelers.....7  
Shane Co.....52  
Wedding Day Diamonds.....3

### Legal

Bortel Firm, LLC.....9  
Heltzer Law Office.....11  
Houghtaling Family Law.....17  
Jerry Burg, Attorney at Law.....6

### Malls & Shopping Centers

Shops at the West End.....39

### Media & Communications

Radio K 770.....39

### Mortgage

First Equity.....5

### Real Estate & Rentals

The Flats at West End.....35  
Richardson, Beth.....17

### Restaurants

Darby's Pub & Grill.....21  
Burger Moe's.....23  
Encore Karaoke & Sushi Lounge.....7  
Jakeeno's Pizza & Pasta.....21  
Blue Plate.....21  
McCoy's Public House.....21  
Melting Pot, The.....19  
Red Cow.....23

### Sports & Recreation

The Fit Tourist.....17  
Premier Pool & Spa.....17  
Vertical Endeavors.....37

### Travel & Accommodations

Barkers Island Inn.....11  
Water Street Inn.....10

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(National Alliance on Mental Illness) Providing free classes and peer support groups for people affected by mental illnesses.

800 Transfer Rd. #31  
St. Paul, MN 55114  
(651) 645-2948  
[www.namihelps.org](http://www.namihelps.org)

### LIBRARY

#### **Quatrefoil Library**

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1220 E. Lake St.  
Minneapolis, MN 55407  
(612) 729-2543  
[www.qlibrary.org](http://www.qlibrary.org)

### MUSEUM

#### **Minnesota Historical Society Sites & Museums**

Make the Minnesota Historical Society's 26 historic sites and museums part of your vacation plans. [www.mnhs.org](http://www.mnhs.org)

#### **Weisman Art Museum**

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Minneapolis, MN  
(612) 625-9494  
[www.wam.umn.edu](http://www.wam.umn.edu)

### MUSIC

#### **Radio K 770**

Radio K is the student-run radio station of the University of Minnesota

330 21st Ave. S.  
610 Rarig Center  
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[www.radiok.org](http://www.radiok.org)

### PERFORMING ARTS

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(612) 435-0055  
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#### **Hennepin Theatre Trust**

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Minneapolis, MN  
1-800-982-2787  
[www.HennepinTheatreTrust.org](http://www.HennepinTheatreTrust.org)



## COMMUNITY CONNECTION

### History Theatre

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30 E. 10th St.  
St. Paul, MN  
(651) 292-4323  
[www.HistoryTheatre.com](http://www.HistoryTheatre.com)

### Minnesota Orchestra

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1111 Nicollet Mall  
Minneapolis, MN  
(612) 371-5656  
(800) 292-4141  
[www.minnesotaorchestra.org](http://www.minnesotaorchestra.org)

### Northrop - University of Minnesota

An epicenter of discovery and transformation celebrating innovation in the arts, performance, and academics.  
84 Church St. SE  
Minneapolis, MN 55414  
(612) 625-6600  
[northrop.umn.edu](http://northrop.umn.edu)

### Ordway Center for the Performing Arts

Hosting, presenting, and creating performing arts and educational programs that enrich diverse audiences.  
345 Washington St.  
St. Paul, MN  
(651) 224-4222  
[www.ordway.org](http://www.ordway.org)

### The Minnesota Opera

MN Opera invites you to enjoy 20% off any non-opening performance. Use code **lavender20**.  
620 North First Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55401  
612-333-6669  
[mnopera.org](http://mnopera.org)

### Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus

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528 Hennepin Ave., Suite 307  
Minneapolis, MN  
(612) 339-SONG (7664)  
[chorus@tcgmc.org](mailto:chorus@tcgmc.org)  
[www.tcgmc.org](http://www.tcgmc.org)

### VocalEssence

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1900 Nicollet Mall  
Minneapolis, MN 55403  
(612) 547-1451  
[www.vocalescence.org](http://www.vocalescence.org)

### POLITICS & RIGHTS

#### OutFront Minnesota

Delivering programs/services in the area of public policy, anti-violence, education, training and law.  
310 E. 38th St., Ste. 204  
Minneapolis, MN  
(612) 822-0127  
[www.outfront.org](http://www.outfront.org)

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#### Twin Cities Pride

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[www.centralmpls.org](http://www.centralmpls.org)

### Edina Community Lutheran Church

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(952) 926-3808  
[www.eclc.org](http://www.eclc.org)

### First Christian Church - Disciples of Christ

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610 W. 28th St.  
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(612) 870-1868  
[www.fccminneapolis.org](http://www.fccminneapolis.org)

### Pilgrim Lutheran Church

Inclusive Christian Worshipping community that seeks, nurtures and empowers hungry minds and souls.  
1935 St. Clair Ave.  
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[www.pilgrimstpaul.org](http://www.pilgrimstpaul.org)

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inquiring INSPIRING inclusive. Wherever you are on your faith journey, St Mark's welcomes you.  
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Minneapolis, MN  
(612) 870-7800  
[www.ourcathedral.org](http://www.ourcathedral.org)

### United Methodist Reconciling Churches

Congregations around Minnesota that intentionally welcome all people regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.  
[www.mnrcumc.org](http://www.mnrcumc.org)

### Westminster Presbyterian Church

An inclusive, welcoming, open and affirming congregation.  
Nicollet Mall at 12th St.  
Downtown Minneapolis  
(612) 332-3421  
[www.westminstermpls.org](http://www.westminstermpls.org)

### SPORTS & RECREATION

#### Twin Cities Goodtime Softball League (TCGSL)

Join 500 GLBT softball players as we celebrate 36 years of gay softball in Minnesota.  
P.O. Box 580264  
Minneapolis, MN  
[www.tcgsl.org](http://www.tcgsl.org)

### STATE FAIRS

#### Minnesota State Fair

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[www.minneapolis.org](http://www.minneapolis.org)

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# Motivation & the Gym

For some of my friends who don't attend the gym, it feels to them to be a blaring moniker of vanity. While the gym itself is not a vain construction, people's declaration of their health club lifestyles can come off narcissistically. As one of my younger friends explained, "Social media has taken a toll on what going to the gym even means or what results come from the gym. It makes me ask, are you doing this for your personal goals or just doing it for the status? Men's Instagrams are full of pictures that say 'leg day' or show off their abs. I don't think having a six-pack means you're the most beautiful man in the world. It's hard, but I have to avoid that pressure by remembering what I like in myself."

The gym is an environment that carries a great deal of emotional significance for many people. Whether it's felt as a place of empowerment, an edifice of dread, a seasonal habitat, a facility to train in one's craft, or the means to an end, the modern day gym carries a lot of weight in our culture and our sense of self. I've spent much of the past week dialoguing with friends and colleagues about what the gym means to them and what drives them to be there.

A friend of mine recently told me she was propelled to work out at the gym to achieve a "revenge body." She shared that a recent breakup had sent her to the gym in the pursuit of a figure that would make her ex-boyfriend jealous. While this seemed to me an unhealthy cause for motivation, upon further research of the term's popularity, it seems many a scorned heart is pumping iron in the pursuit of other's envy. Khloe Kardashian has a new show on the E! Network by the name *Revenge Body*. America loves an underdog story and this Kardashian aims to use the notorious term under the guise of empowering women for a comeback. The term is too real and the motivation all too relevant for many of my twentysomething friends who take aim at a full-body selfie that will haunt their exes.

It is not for me to judge people's personal motivations for going to the gym, but after speaking with friends at length about a gym regimen directed at aesthetic results, I felt moved to seek out a different kind of gym-goer. I found that in my 52-year-old friend and mentor, "My father

died at the age of 50 from a heart attack. Every two years, the men in my family have to do a cardiac workup at the doctors' office to make sure our cardiovascular systems are in proper order."

Four years ago, this routine trip to the doctor brought a nerve-racking result, "When I was 48, I went and did this stress test. It took a lot out of me; more than it should have. So I decided at that point that I needed to work out more. It's not high on my list of things I'd call priorities. I'm very self-conscious about how I look and I felt 20 years older than everyone else at the gym, even though I probably wasn't. I felt like people said, 'What is that fat old guy doing here?'"

Propelled by the necessity to take care of his body and the fear of his family's medical history, he found that going to the gym before work felt the safest, "I experimented with different gym times and the place I felt the most comfortable was in the morning. The atmosphere of the gym seemed to feel more club-like after 2 p.m., far less centered on exercise."

For a friend of mine in the performing arts industry, the gym provided an emotional escape while he was going through a trying time. "There was a six-month stretch of time where I went to the gym almost every day as an escape. I was able to channel my energy. Focusing on an exercise meant I could get away from the things that were stressful for me, positive or negative. I think I reached a place of contentment with my body image, my eating habits, and stress management. Healthy living doesn't always mean a daily or weekly gym ritual as much as it means having a balance. I think I realized the gym was never as much about health as it was about finding a way that I felt I could escape."

When it comes to the motivation that takes one through the gym's doors, it's clearly a credo of to each their own. For me, what was once an admittedly scary place, has become less intimidating with the opportunity to talk to a few others with similar anxieties. While there will always be an air of vanity to fitness perpetuated by unstoppable elements like social media and the Kardashians, when going to the gym, taking a moment to humanize those around me makes the experience lighter. Everyone is on a journey. The gym is just one stop. ■



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